ARTICLES

OF

Visitation & Enquiry

Exhibited to the

MINISTERS,

CHURCHWARDENS, and SIDEMEN

Of every Parish in the primary Episcopal Visitation

Of the Right Reverend Father in God

JOHN

[Fell]

By Divine Permission Lord Bishop of

OXFORD.

(1675)

The tenor of the Oath to be administred to the Churchwardens, and Sidemen of every Parish.

You shall swear truly and faithfully to execute the Office of a Churchwarden within your Parish, and according to the best of your skill and knowledg present such Things and Persons, as you know to be presentable by the laws Ecclesiastical of this Realm. So help you God, and the contents of this Book.

ARTICLES OF INSTRUCTION

FOR

Visitation and Enquiry

IN THE

DIOCESS of *OXFORD*.

TIT. I.

Concerning Churches and Chapels, with the Ornaments and Furniture thereunto belonging.

1. IS your Church or Chapel in good and sufficient repare, and so decently and cleanly kept as becomes the house of God?

2. Is the furniture of your Church or Chapel, as Bells, Communion plate and Cloths, Ministers surplice, Pulpit-cloth, Herse-cloth, with other usual Ornaments duly provided, and decently kept?

3. Have you a fair Bible, book of Common Praier, books of Homilies, and Canons; a Register of Births, Burials and Mariages, and is the said Register duly kept,

and the transcript return'd every year into the Bishops Registery? Have you also a Register of such Strangers as are admitted to Preach; and a book for the entry of the Church-wardens accounts? And are the said books carefully lookt to, and constantly employed?

TIT. II.

Concerning the Church-yard, the Houses, Glebes, and Tiths belonging to the Church.

1. IS your Church-yard sufficiently fenced and preserved from anoiance, encrochments, and wast?

2. Is the dwelling-house, and all the out-houses of your Parson, Vicar, or Curate kept in good repare: and are the Glebe-lands, Orchards, Gardens, and other easements belonging to them, preserv'd from being embezel'd, or endammag'd? And have you a perfect Terror of such Glebe-lands, Orchards, &c. and also of Pensions, Tiths, and compositions as belong unto them?

TIT. III.

Concerning Ministers.

1. HAve you a Parson, Vicar, or Curate legally setled among you?

2. Is he constantly resident? or how long, and on what occasion is he absent? has he a Curate? how is he

licensed, and how maintain'd? During his absence, what care is taken for hospitality, and charity to the poor?

3. Do's your Parson, Vicar, or Curate constantly, reverently, and regularly Officiate on the Lords daies, Holidaies, and the Eves of them; as also read the Letany upon all wenesdaies; and fridaies weekly; and observe Rogation and Emberdaies according to the order of the Church; and so perform all offices, without addition or diminution?

3. Do's your Minister diligently instruct the youth of your Parish in the Church Catechism? and do's he endeavor to reclame all profane persons, Papists, and Sectaries; and press the great duties of piety, justice, temperance, charity, allegiance, and conformity? And is he diligent in visiting the sick, and satisfying the doubts of troubled consciences? Lastly, is he peaceable, sober, and exemplary in his conversation, and grave in his demeanor, company, hair, and apparel?

TIT. IV.

Concerning the Parishioners.

1. ARE there in your Parish any persons known or reputed to be Jews, Heretics, or Schismatics, whether Papists, or Fanatics? what are the numbers of each particular Sect of them? and are they studious to

pervert the Orthodox, or insolent towards them for doing their duty?

2. Are any of your Parish known or suspected to be guilty of Incest, Adultery, Fornication, or any other enormous crimes? Do any profane the Lords day, or the Name of God, or are irreverent in the Church, or neglect the respective duties incumbent on them in reference to the Sacraments of Baptism, and the Lords Supper, and other Rites; as of Catechizing, Confirmation, Mariage, thanksgiving after Child-birth, burial of the dead, or the censures of the Church?

3. Are the Wills and Testaments of the dead in your Parish, or the administration of their Goods duly taken out and executed? Have any Lands, Legacies, or charitable gifts bestowed on your Parish, or any other good uses, bin embezled, or unduly dispos'd of?

TIT. V.

Concerning Parish Clerks, and Sextons.

HAve you belonging to your Parish or Chapelry a sufficient Clerk or Sexton, and do's he faithfully and diligently execute his office?

TIT. VI.

Concerning Hospitals, Scholes, Scholemasters, Physicians, Chirurgions, and Midwives.

1. IS there in your Parish any Hospital, Almes-house, or Free-schole? How are they endowed, ordered, and governed? Do's any one keep Schole without licence from the Bishop: or if licensed, neglect to teach the Youth committed to him the Catechism of the Church, and Grammar set forth by autority; and to bring them to the Service of the Church?

2. Do's any in your Parish practice Physic, or Chirurgery, or do the Office of a Midwife, without approbation and licence from the Ordinary?

TIT. VII.

Concerning Ecclesiastical Officers.

1. HAve any Officers that exercise Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction in this Diocess, taken, or exacted any excessive Fees for any Cause or Act; or any Bribe, or Reward for the concelement or impunity of delinquents: or sped any Act privately, and not in the presence of a public Notary?

2. Is the number of the Apparitors in this Diocess excessive; have they summon'd any person unlawfully; or taken reward for concelements; or threatned

prosecutions where they had no reward, or otherwise misbehaved themselves in their Office?

Advertisements.

I. THe Minister of every parish may joyn in presentment with the Churchwardens and Sidemen; and if they fail to present, the Ministers themselves (who have the highest obligation to endeavour the suppressing of impiety and disorder) may do it.

II. The Minister, Churchwardens and Sidemen, at the delivery of their bill of presentment, are required to draw up in writing and attest under their hands, a particular account of the number of Recusants, whether Popish or other; and also the number of the Orthodox and conformable in their Parish, as follows.

1. *What number of Persons is there in common estimation in your Parish?*

2. *What number of Popish Recusants, or persons thereof suspected, is there?*

3. *What number of other Dissenters is there, who relinquish the Communion of the Church?*

III. The Ministers are to take notice, that the Bishop at his Visitation will be ready to confirm the Youth that shall be fitted and brought before him: and therefore are desir'd by diligent Catechizing to prepare those under their charge, and to bring them, at the time appointed, unto the Bishop.